

PRIORITY SETTING EXERCISE
(A Customization of the Criteria Weighting Method)

Priorities will be set among identified health issue areas using a method that weighs: 1) the ability to evaluate outcomes; 2) the size of the problem; and 3) the seriousness of the problem. Each of these questions should be considered separately and the results collated. The resulting score will establish the relative priorities of the identified health problems.

As you are completing this exercise, please keep in mind that you were asked to serve on this Task Force because of your perspective. There is no right or wrong answer to the questions. You must weigh your understanding of the numbers provided with your perception of the issues identified.

Please complete the attached worksheet and bring it to the next meeting.

1. ABILITY TO EVALUATE OUTCOMES

Give each identified health problem a numerical rating on a scale of 0 through 10 that reflects the ability to evaluate the outcome of any given intervention; the more measurable (either numbers or perception), the higher the number.

Available Data	"Outcome" Rating
None	0
Perceptions only-- anecdotal	1 or 2
Perceptions and some numbers-- e.g. counts of services delivered	3,4, or 5
Perceptions and numbers-- some baseline available for comparison; e.g. snapshot survey without ongoing evaluation	5,6, or 7
Perceptions and numbers-- baseline available for several years to establish trends	8,9, or 10

This exercise was adapted from the Thurston County Public Health and Social Services Department, WA

2. SIZE OF THE HEALTH PROBLEM

Give each health problem a numerical rating on a scale of 0 through 10 that reflects the percentage of the local population affected by the particular problem-- the higher the percentage affected, the larger the number.

Population with the health problem (numbers in brackets are based on 180,000 - the population of County X)	"Size" Rating
less than 0.01% (18 people)	0
0.01% through 0.09% (162 people)	1 or 2
0.1% through 0.9% (1,620 people)	3 or 4
1% through 9.9% (17,820 people)	5 or 6
10% through 24.9% (44, 820 people)	7 or 8
25% or more (more than 45,000 people)	9 or 10

Because the size of the problem is considered to be more critical than our ability to evaluate outcomes, this score will be multiplied by a factor of 2.

3. SERIOUSNESS OF THE HEALTH PROBLEM

Give each health problem a numerical rating on a scale of 0 through 10 that reflects the seriousness of the particular problem-- the more serious the problem, the larger the number.

Recognizing that this rating is subjective, the following questions may be helpful in setting criteria for rating the seriousness of health problems:

- What is the emergent nature of the health problem? Is there an urgency to intervene? Is there public concern? Does the health problem cause long term illness?
- What is the severity of the problem? Does the problem have a high death rate or high hospitalization rate or does the problem cause premature illness or death over time?
- Is there actual or potential economic loss associated with the health problem? Will the community have to bear the economic burden?
- What is the potential or actual impact on others in the community (e.g. measles spread in susceptible populations)?

How serious is the health problem?	"Seriousness" Rating
Not serious-- little impact	0, 1, or 2
Moderately serious-- illness	3, 4, or 5
Serious-- some deaths, impacts others	6, 7, or 8
Very serious-- high death rate, premature death, great impact on others	9 or 10

Because the seriousness of the problem is considered to be more critical than our ability to evaluate outcomes or the size of the problem, this score will be multiplied by a factor of 3.

COMMUNITY HEALTH TASK FORCE

WORKSHEET: SETTING PRIORITIES

Health Problem	Outcome (Score X 1)	Size (Score X 2)	Seriousness (Score x 3)	Total Score
Access				
Violence				
Substance Abuse				
Chronic Disease				
Environment				
Mental Health				
Prenatal Care				
Education				
Nutrition				
Infectious Disease				
Dental				
Total				